

OCT 27 1964

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Slums and Foreign Policy

To the Herald Tribune:

Permit me to disagree sharply with your editorial comment on my statement that the needs of our own poverty-stricken slums in New York City and other urban communities should be given urgent priority over certain of our foreign aid expenditures.

This is not "somewhat irrelevant," as you suggest. Throughout the world, as we properly seek to aid other nations, the propaganda of Soviet Russia, Red China, Cuba and others is based in large measure upon vivid portrayals of our slums as evidence of the failure of the capitalist system. Why follow United States leadership, they ask, when even in such wealthy cities as New York, Chicago and Washington, D. C., there exist great areas of hopeless poverty and human decay. Tragic to say, our competitors for world opinion need not exaggerate these conditions.

If we are to hold forth to less fortunate nations our own free society as a worthy leader, it is imperative that we give urgent priority to the eradication of domestic poverty. Meanwhile, it is indisputable that there has been great waste in our expenditures for aid to foreign regimes throughout the world since World War II. We need not refer only to Africa and Asia. May I cite the manner in which our foreign aid in certain Latin American countries fails to strengthen their national economy or to raise the living standards of the common people. Vast sums of our aid have benefited only tiny oligarchies and their numbered Swiss bank accounts.

Enthusiastic New York support is needed for our new board program, which is realistic and demonstrably necessary to break the vicious cycle of poverty, unemployment and lack of educational opportunity among hundreds of thousands of our citizens, especially the youth.

JAMES B. DONOVAN,
President, Board of Education, City of New York.
New York